

NOTES ON HOW TO LIVE: THE BEHAVIORAL LEFT UNMASKED

by Leopold Tyrmand

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"It was a long, long time ago, perhaps last Friday..." Winnie the Pooh used to say. Some 40 years ago (which to history is only last Friday) a jazz singer by the name of Lee Wiley sang a blues entitled "Down to Steamboat Tennessee." It went:

They say a time's a comin' when a woman won't
need a man
They say a time's a comin' when a woman won't
need a man
I'm gonna keep that time from comin' if I can...



I'm afraid that today these lines would be regarded by feminists and many others as an outrage, a call to oppression, a calamity. Yet they contain one of the preconditions of human nature; the correctness of Lee Wiley's choice can be rejected only at the cost of the most nourishing instincts that have preserved the species on this planet.

Thus, why is it that something which affirms the rudiments of existence in the lyrics of a song that portrays us as we truly are is considered by so many people to be inimical, invidious, corrupted?

Most likely the reason is that the ideas which engendered the contemporary culture have passed a verdict that determines how we should live. In this particular instance, we are confronted with an idea which assumes that a woman does not necessarily need a man to fulfill her destiny as a woman. The conse-

im•pri•mis (im-pri-mis) adv. In the first place. Middle English, from Latin in primis, among the first (things)....

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quences of this idea are multiple: among other things, it has—to a large extent—restructured the patterns of how we already live.

In the journalistic din of our days, when reporters spout psychoanalytical lingo with the agility of a hot-dog-stand operator, we constantly run into feature articles which inform us that the rate of divorce quadrupled during the '60s, or that the number of unmarried couples living together tripled between 1970 and 1980. Reading these articles, I get an eerie feeling—as if a silent-movie slapstick tempo had been applied to the statistics: they suggest that until the 1960s people divorced at a relaxed pace, but once the calendar turned over to the '60s, suddenly Americans began feverishly to divorce, or shack up, with the speed of an animated cartoon. The question that comes to a developed mind is: Why? Why would a society that divorced seldom in December, 1959 start to divorce hectically in January, 1960? What could be the reason for such an acceleration? Neither *Time* nor *Newsweek* bother with such questions in their smart-alecky reporting on what they call social change: all they want is to inform about the change and to quote from books which claim to describe it.

Professor Jacques Barzun, the eminent educator, wrote recently in the *New York Review of Books*: "Thirty-six years have passed...[since the publication of his renowned work *Teacher in America*]. The once proud and efficient public school system of the United States has turned into a wasteland where violence and vice share the time with ignorance and idleness..." Again, anyone with intelligence would ask: "Why? Isn't it possible to point out the culprits who are guilty of ravaging an institution that served us so well for so long?" However, neither *The Washington Post* nor any other self-appointed conscience would venture too deeply into such an investigation; it might show that Professor Barzun's 36 years are about equal to the length of the hegemony of liberal thought in education, that those 36 years coincide with the publication of books that recklessly promulgated ill-advised ideas for change, ideas whose aim was to "bring education closer to the people"—a spurious claim, since American education has always been of and for the people. What happened during that time was that two generations of liberal prophets declared personal integrity, responsibility, and self-reliance to be dubious qualities, tools of corporate capitalism's mental repression, devised to keep Americans locked into apathy and subservience. Since then, rebellion against any established order has been saluted as a supreme virtue; self-reliance was denounced as naïveté and moral responsibility as superstition. Now that Professor Barzun's wasteland has been realized, the liberal media—perhaps the most insidious culprit of the current educational quagmire—who, for 36 years have hidden from the public any but liberal concepts of education, suddenly unleash

their propagandists to tell Americans that *they* have invented the idea of teaching honesty, responsibility, and self-reliance. In other words, the media seem to be rooting for another change—without acknowledging that the conservative critics of previous changes were right.

What is culture?

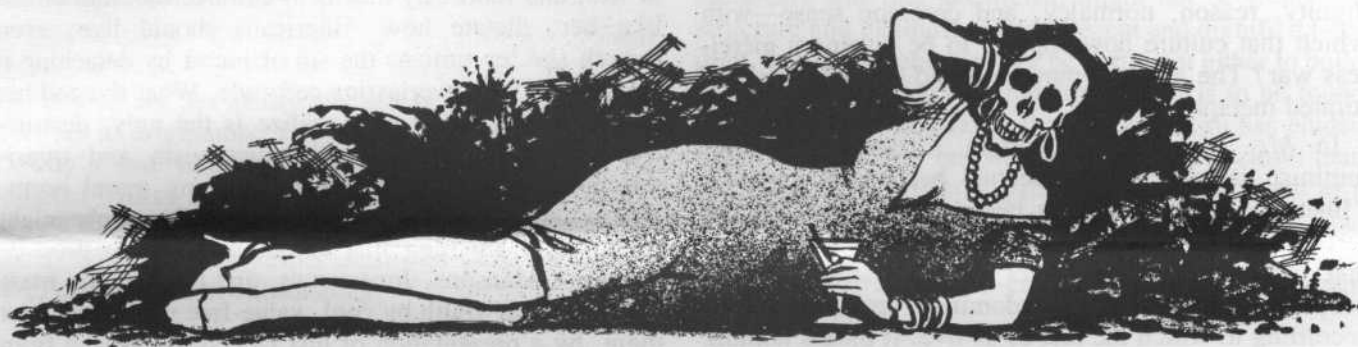
Of course, first come the books and then the change. The all-encompassing answer to "why" there have been so many divorces and such a collapse of education is culture, but the mass media are reluctant to admit that the ideas promoted by books of *their* culture—which we can honestly and accurately call the liberal culture—for years have been inculcating behavioral habits into people's minds, foolish novelties about and modish attitudes toward marriage, divorce, fidelity, marital obligations, personal propensities and penchants. The media scarcely wish to confess that those ideas have finally resulted in the splitting of families and in a surge of various forms of what, not long ago, would have been called living in sin or trampling conventions. The media won't ever admit that a cultural model, derived from a body of ideas, quite often tells people how to live by means of sleazy gossip columns. A *Chicago Tribune* columnist recently wrote that the messy dissolution of norms we are experiencing today is the work of two men—Elvis Presley and Hugh Hefner. He credited those two sub-humans with the transformation of the nation's mores to a greater extent than any philosopher or statesman was ever able to accomplish. He is not entirely wrong, only depressingly shallow. Presley and Hefner would never have bloomed if certain cultural formations which were rooted in ideas had not *allowed* them to flourish, if those ideas had not consecrated and endorsed their subcultural products. The nihilism, born of philosophies and novels of which they had never heard, long preceded Presley and Hefner.

You, I—we *all* live according to culture. What is culture? There are countless definitions, but I, for one, subscribe to one by a Polish writer of my generation who died young, but first wrote: "Civilization is fork, spoon, and knife. Culture is how to use them." It sounds simple, but as one begins to think about this simplicity one realizes that the consequences of his aphorism are staggering.

About civilization, Orwell said that it is all of us. His is a definition poignant in its directness. The key word to Western civilization is quality. In no other civilization has quality—that is the excellence of efforts and results, be they spiritual or material—been declared of such paramount value as in the Judaeo-Christian one. Quality also means honesty of endeavors and a supreme concern for intellectual honor, a concern that cannot be dismissed by cynicism, or fatalism, or man's cosmic frailty. The Western notion of quality

assured us of prominence in the world, but for the last half-century we have failed properly to translate that notion of quality into culture, that is into patterns for what to believe in and how to live. We have lost the qualitative meaning of life. The loss of the sense of quality, out of which the Judaeo-Christian concepts of reason, personal responsibility, and social freedom have structured Western civilization, has become—to my mind—the crucial issue at this juncture of American history.

true measure of freedom. In Europe the void was soon filled by Marxian and anarchist, then fascist and Hitlerian prescriptions for deliverance. We now witness a dangerously analogous process here, chiefly among the strata of the American intelligentsia. Its cultural compass and agenda, as they were formed in the '20s and peaked in our time, were never to understand man—the sacrosanct principle of the Judaeo-Christian civilization—but to explain him. We are now in the midst of an age of dumbfounded discoveries of everything we



Is this failure the result of some inherent defectiveness in our civilization, or is it a disaster we have brought upon ourselves? I tend to think it is the latter. I also suspect that what nowadays is contemptuously called the bourgeois culture was infinitely superior to what is currently imposed upon us as cultural values, tenets and *Zeitgeist*. The bourgeois culture's quest for quality—be it in social arrangements, personal relationships, industrial products, economic ethics, or the texture of daily life—was not without deficiencies, hypocrisies, and abuses of conscience. Yet, since the twilight of the bourgeois culture during the 1920s, since its practical abolition in the 1960s, no subsequent proposition has even approached the stability and psychomoral orderliness of the bourgeois culture, with its ability to create prosperity, foster progress, and produce lasting values—from the bourgeois social contract to *bourgeois cuisine*. Never in history has a culture been more hospitable and beneficial to art than the bourgeois culture: it simultaneously served the artist as a political protector, an economic supporter, and a benevolent target of art's most vicious attacks. The more an artist hacked away at the fabric and texture of bourgeois morality, the more highly rewarded he was. We finally reached the stage of the "liberation" subculture of our time, where the postbourgeois society pays rock stars astronomic payments for its own demise, and artistic rebellion means clownish assaults on constrictions that no longer exist. The bygone nobleness of the bourgeois culture was at the core of its own debacle: its own righteousness begot modern American liberalism which, in turn, refashioned the notion of liberty into a value vacuum.

Sometime around the beginning of our century, philosophers began to intimate that valuelessness is the

have known since time immemorial. History, philosophy, sociology, psychology, the entire field of humanities, which, for millennia, dealt with the exegesis of man as a bearer of values and creativities, became mere sets of instructions, like those that are routinely enclosed with a factory-boxed bicycle. The endless explanation of how to assemble man and humanity to make them operate according to the instructions of Marx, Lenin, or just Masters and Johnson, became a cultural commandment, a promise for secular salvation. Our cities are permeated by evil, embodied in the beastly juvenile who takes life at random, but ours is an epoch when those who still insist on speaking of evil are called simpletons. Those who deny the possibility of man's wickedness and savagery are hailed as sages. The foolish benignity with which those sages teach us that evil is as curable as acne is called scholarship and decency in the newspapers. All of which pushes us closer and closer to the catastrophe of cultural idiocy sanctified as supreme cultural wisdom.

Liberalism and its offspring

Sanctified by whom? By those who rule our culture, continuously turning it into the liberal culture. Let us not make a common mistake: liberalism and the liberal culture are *not* the same. The former is a philosophy which teaches that our goal should be a society that is both free and fair—a respectable end toward which the liberals have strived through rather ill-conceived means. The liberal culture is what liberalism has done to culture, especially to the American culture—that is, to a body of beliefs, traditions, customs, and attitudes which are preserved in morals, manners, notions of value and decency, and their artistic rendition. The relation between liberalism and the liberal culture is

similar to the circumstance where handsome, estimable parents produce an offspring who is a genetic monster which, in spite of its gruesomeness, must be loved and defended.

What are the liberal culture's tenets, criteria, and coordinates? Where should we look for the linkage between that culture and patterns of common existence? How do we measure the liberal culture's directives and manifestations against the Judaeo-Christian and American heritage, against the notions of human dignity, reason, normalcy, and common sense—with which that culture now appears to be waging a merciless war? The answers may be found in seemingly disjointed metaphors.

In *Ms.* magazine, a certain Elizabeth Janeway, feminist theorist and intellectual beacon of women's "liberation," cannot bring herself to a clear-cut censure of incest; she wavers in her judgment. She implies that incest may be a matter of negotiation between people who shape the predominant cultural pattern according to which the rest of us live. It means nothing to Ms. Janeway that the authors of the Bible, Sophocles, and Dr. Freud saw incest as the ultimate disintegration of humanness. Ms. Janeway agrees that it may be a misdeed, perhaps indecent, but her reasoning is drawn from anthropology rather than ethical emotions. She is unconcerned with how incest kills man's inner sanctum, how it robs human beings of the spirituality of passions, how, to many, it is the terminal expiration of sensitivities. Ms. Janeway's lukewarm anxieties are not about our sense of normalcy—a primordial issue in a decaying society—but about "patriarchal myths" or whether the participants in an incestuous relation experience "negative or positive reactions." Her premise is that "contemporary commitment to personal freedom invites us to challenge old taboos as being obsolete." She asks: "Are there limits to liberation...? We still face some uncertainties...." The title of her article, "Incest: A Rational Look at the Oldest Taboo," implies that she argues in the name of rationality. But to me, and to many like me, incest is the very heart of the human soul's darkness, and the manipulative psychosocial rationalism à la Ms. Janeway is an insult to my faith in reason, and perhaps not only mine but also John Locke's and Voltaire's and Jefferson's and John Stuart Mill's, whose credentials in defining rational liberty are certainly not inferior to those of *Ms.* magazine; they never divorced man's spiritual, civic, and political rights from natural law and normative ethics.

Yet when it comes to shaping obligatory cultural proclivities and popular tastes, Ms. Janeway's ideas will be seeping into the American collective consciousness and my ideological tenets will not. The New York publishers and editors will print her views and refuse to print mine. Neither cultural nor intellectual freedom exists in today's America: they are brutally suppressed

by the tyranny of cultural and intellectual fashion. Some will say, "nonsense"—anyone in this country has the right to speak out, to say what he thinks is true. That is correct. But not everyone has the right to be heard. *The New York Times*, ABC, and the president of Yale University ensure that only those whose ideas are deemed proper by the liberal culture's establishment are heard and registered in the popular mind of this land. Ms. Janeway is a part of the reigning culture, and I am not. *She* thus determines American desires, ways of life, and mores by means of culture; she, and others like her, dictate how Americans should live, even though she legitimizes the sin of incest by detaching it from mankind's everlasting certitude. What she and her co-ideologists won't ever realize is the ugly, destructive power of their pseudo-objectivism and quasi-rationality which is unanchored by any moral norm. She is unaware of the dominant culture's unholy might to promote anything that is not damned, to produce countless Mansons, Jonestowns, and the narcotic mass suicide of our youth by cool, value-free reporting about them, by a presentation of just facts disconnected from any moral or empirical context. She won't ever pay heed to mankind's eternal sureness that incest annihilates what should be inviolable, by murdering the notion of normalcy in us. Her rejection of unambiguity is in fact promotion, for any modern mass diffusion of images and ideas results in *promoting anything*, even evil, if it is not explicitly denounced as evil.

Breakdown of a civilization

This circumstance is even clearer in the quandary of a noted American socialist, Mr. Michael Harrington, who, in a recently published book (*The Next America*), wonders whether Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and "the rest of us" who called for violation of "unjust laws in the name of true legality" ended up with the socio-moral message that "no laws are binding." "Was our higher justice an incentive to common crime?" Mr. Harrington asks himself. But he is easily assuaged: a researcher on the subject of teenage crime assures Mr. Harrington that the worst juvenile black felons are unaware of either the civil-rights movement or Dr. King's existence. And here is the very center of the phenomenon which predicates the liberal culture's power to form its how-to-live directives, its blithe nefariousness in imbuing those models with an apostolic innocence that so easily turns into existential evil. It is not what they preach—the Harringtons, the Janeways—but the cultural and moral climate they create that allows animalistic incentives to blossom, turning the contemporary scene into a jungle of senseless tragedies, whitewashed vice, emotional misery, psychological squalor, mental squalidness. The murderous black teenager needs to know nothing of Dr. King other than the fact that the late leader declared justice tantamount to retribution—because such distor-

tion is, in point of fact, what the Black Panthers, the New Left, the Berkeley Free Speech Movement, the so-called counterculture, the rock subculture, assorted journals of opinion like *The Nation* and *Mother Jones* and, last but not least, their avid supporters in the *New York Review of Books*, CBS, and *Playboy* have made of Dr. King's communication to American blacks. In a 1971 story about a black laborer in Detroit who killed three innocent people in a fit of rage, *Time* magazine sounded somehow sympathetic to the killer—hardly Dr. King's vision of affirmative action.

This is where the silliness of the *Chicago Tribune* columnist comes in: he does not understand that Presley and Hefner are just sleazy artifacts of an idea for how to live, not its originators. They are the end products of John Dewey's and William James's thought and Edna St. Vincent Millay's poetry, of Thorstein Veblen's sociology, Charles Beard's history, and Lincoln Steffens's social criticism—the respectability of those names and their endeavors notwithstanding.

About the middle of the '60s, America and the world witnessed the emergence of what I call the Behavioral Left—a sinister and far-reaching phenomenon which, contrary to Marxian prophecy, used the social elites as a weapon for an amorphous and sterile social change. This occurrence brought neither justice nor welfare to the masses; those elites were just armored vehicles in the all-out war against the Judaeo-Christian philosophical legacy. It was sort of an ideological vampirism, a "Body Snatchers" toxic principle: anyone bitten or pollinated was henceforth a carrier of the disease. The final result was the breakdown of a civilization which had been erected on a special American mixture of seventeenth-century religious moralism revived by the nineteenth century's great sociomoral battles, together with the eighteenth-century rationalism that provided the legal and political structure of the American statehood. That glorious amalgam of reason blended with idealism and of moral concerns permeated by pragmatic principle made America great, the object of the world's envy, admiration, and hope, the paradigm of practical democracy. Then, during our lifetime, American liberalism transmogrified into the liberal culture, and what we now see around us is a new America, a nation that is hostage to new prejudices, orthodoxies, and charlatanries. The Behavioral Left is one of them, a direct descendent of the liberal culture; its battle cry for "emancipation of penchants," whatever their nature, has more in common with Hitler's *Blut und Boden* (blood and soil) ideal of prefabricated impulses than with what Aquinas, Pascal, and Hume taught about man's inner resources.

The American democracy was, from its inception, rooted in the concept of social contract, in which prohibitions were carefully balanced against permissions. The liberal culture cancelled that balance: instead, it introduced the limitless expansion of so-called human rights—to the point that the notion of rights became decomposed and its atrophy opened the door to a lawless-

ness that turned most of the social bonds into caricatures. Certainly human and civil rights can and should be rationally enlarged, but there is danger of human dignity's being mercilessly trampled in a process in which rights become, by principle, unconstrained by duties. There exists a complex interrelationship among human dignity, decency, and unbounded freedom, and these three categories were juggled much too nonchalantly by the liberal manifestos of the last half-century. The most precious part of what the Founding Fathers devised for us *culturally* was that skepticism might not be enough to structure and institutionalize a decent and dignified freedom, but faith alone may not be sufficient either to build the "City on a Hill." What enriches us is to be found between reason and faith; that golden mean has eluded men for millennia, but we Americans came closer than any nation on earth to crystallizing this ingredient as a propitious component of our society and our lives. That is, we were adamant in our slow pursuit of that ideal—until the liberal culture established its despotic reign during the 1960s.

From James Madison to Keith Richard

The bequest of the 1960s, and the degeneration of the civilizational prototype we inherited from the Founding Fathers can perhaps be best encapsulated in the recent exclamation of a 22-year-old president of student government at the University of Massachusetts. "Our human rights are at stake here!" shouted the young man during a violent protest against the school administration's decision to ban coed bathrooms in dormitories and the common use of facilities by both sexes. The postulate of unisexual body ablutions has thus become a sublime measure of fundamental freedom in the mind of an educated person. We can only guess the expression on the faces of Tom Paine or James Madison if they were told that, by the end of the twentieth century in America, the supreme criterion of human rights would be an option of where, and in whose company, a bowel movement can be the most satisfying procedure. Here we can witness the impact on one feeble mind of the cultural climate in which grandiose goals are pursued by means of oppressive imbecility.

Many of us feel that the world has become too small and too crowded for such a ludicrous distortion of common sense, but many who think that are unaware of the attractiveness of simplism, vulgarity, and triteness—the best fertilizers on which the Behavioral Left breeds feminism and Red Brigades, sexual deviations and debased schemes of pleasure, abomination as entertainment and vileness as beauty. The abhorrent visage of the Rolling Stones' Keith Richard on the cover of *Rolling Stone* magazine is repellent not just because it is the physiognomy of a demented Dickensian highwayman, but also because it is imposed upon our reality as the aesthetics for our time, an exemplar of masculine charm, handsomeness, and winsomeness once associated with human faces like those of Clark Gable or Gary Cooper.

The Behavioral Left's only ideological vector is to destroy the old order, but as the moral order known to mankind prior to the 1960s is already in a shambles, its fury and venom actually have no outlet. There is nothing left for it except bloody terrorism or degenerate indulgence in repulsive grotesqueness of fun, the worship of decadent abnormality, obscene wealth, specious mysticism, debilitating sybaritism, self-destruction through costly narcotics—which ultimately means that the Behavioral Left has climbed into bed with all the moral enemies that it allegedly went to war against in the first place.

Nowhere is this abysmal fraud more visible than in the current literature that is ceaselessly boosted by national magazines as our title to cultural glory. The mystifications of the Mailers, Vonneguts, Vidsals, Updikes, Hellers, Doctorows, etc. are inherent in their literary premise, oddly common to all of them: that simplification and shallowness are immanent in our reality, that man's redemption is contingent on his commitment to sordidness, that his passions can be reduced to only violence, and that his freakish deformations are his beauty. No one has dissected this aberration promoted as refinement better than Saul Bellow in *Mr. Sammler's Planet*, an analysis of how psychoanalysis and liberalism rob modern man of self-respect, how the superficially enlightened and primitively satiated man becomes the doleful prey of alienation touted as higher consciousness, how lofty platitudes burglarize the individual and social ethos by preventing man from making honorable use of his own part in the spectacle of living. Reading Bellow, one realizes how the cheap modern psychologism cancels out all the literary components of the great fiction spawned by the bourgeois culture. "By their fruits ye shall know them..." sounds in the Behavioral Left's parlance like an advertisement for a homosexual hangout—and that may be the most concise statement of its impact on American everydayness.

Humans can be created or produced. History, religion, tradition, the family have all had the power to create people. Society can only produce them. Over the last 50 years in America, producing people became the ideal of liberal ideologues. The result is a tremendous number of children who are disconnected from any communication with parents, of people who have been so brainwashed that they can no longer understand words like "virtue," "civility," "normalcy," who are isolated from religion and deracinated from history. They became products of mores devised by paltry TV "sociology;" their brains were softened to the condition of rancid mush by moronic pop songs; they became commodities put together by scoundrelous mass-cultural operators, humanoids animated by a music inspired by man's never-extirpated inclination to brutishness.

One Mr. Jason Epstein—shining light of the *New York Review of Books*, the announcements of which are the holy writ for the liberal establishment—recently blamed

the all-engulfing picture of debasement, callousness, and chaos on "the democratization of extravagance that has put us in this mess..." He meant our economic rather than our cultural limbo, but his elegant ennui, camouflaging a trace of panic, can serve as an accurate pointer. All I need is to provide exemplifications of Mr. Epstein's *mot juste*. Our reality, recorded every day in the papers, teems with things which once would have been deemed insane, horrendous, nauseating, or just shocking, but their nonstop reappearance in our awareness, even in plain sight, has made them commonplace. Perhaps the cardinal sin of the contemporary culture is its ruthless extermination of the charm of the uncommon, the exceptional, the stupendous; when specialness turns into banality, *anything* can be endlessly trivialized, made the butt of callow jokes, become a matter of cursory practices. This is what has happened to sex education as both an educational idea and a social factor. By annihilating the notion of normalcy, we abrogated our sense of the extraordinary: our sanity is thus anesthetized—and this does not bode well for our survival as a civilization.

What do we do when we learn that in some junior high schools in Humboldt County, California (reported by *The Public Interest*, Spring 1979), radical teachers teach—yes, teach—seventh graders how to masturbate, and Planned Parenthood outlines courses in copulation for seventh- and eighth-grade students? What do we do about the practice of rock bands on the road, whose members assemble in their Holiday Inn rooms large numbers of 14-year-old girls and perform nude before them, endowing them with hysterias, torpors, and psychological malfunctions for the rest of their lives? The Rolling Stones seem to be the masters of this cute leisure pastime, according to a chintzy journalist who writes their paean in *New York* magazine; he emphasizes how the Rolling Stones are *above* the law by dint of their genius and what a "massive, untapped" sociocultural power they are—which in the end means that they have a super franchise for telling people how to live. The idea of animated dildoes, which is all the existence of the Rolling Stones amounts to, has already made two generations pay enormous sums of money to ruthless tricksters in return for their reversing some fundamental principles of being, for imparting the extremes of lewd experience to children, thus robbing them of childhood and poisoning them with a psychobiological excess for which another payment is still to come.

And what about a professor of child and family studies at the University of Syracuse who, in a book published by the New York Times Book Co. and entitled *The Teen-age Survival Book*, writes that a girl, when approached for sex, should ask the boy to use a prophylactic, saying: "All the boys I know enjoy it with a condom on. What's wrong with you?" The professor, in his bottomless stupidity, seems unaware that he teaches whorishness, but his vision of things sexual is reverently published by *The New York Times*, the liberal oracle. It's very doubtful

that the same organ would publish a rebuke to the phenomenon of professors who, their intentions notwithstanding, actually scavenge on human vulnerabilities. What do we do with the fact that America is the only society in mankind's history in which a publication called *Counterspy—Covert Action Information Bulletin* openly and precisely identifies American intelligence agents—that is, defenders of our freedom against America's most implacable enemy, the Soviet Union—thereby acting in open complicity with that enemy? We could talk about literature, which turned into a slimy retailing of private secretions relentlessly made public and is still stubbornly proclaimed literature by the bullhorns of the liberal culture in magazines, electronic media, the daily press.

Cleansing the collective mind

However, those questions that are called social issues and, in fact, are everyday quandaries of how to live, seem to me of overriding importance. The last presidential election was said to be won by President Reagan on pocket-book issues. I have often wondered what, in the end, really motivated the vote of an American working man who was told by his union that Reagan's victory would mean economic policies which would cause the loss of his job, house, two cars, and lower-middle-class status, but whose 14-year-old daughter was pregnant while his 16-year-old son was hospitalized for a drug overdose that had crippled his brain for life. Does the man think only in categories of economic well-being, or is there something else that predicates his balloting?

After all, he reads the papers, where he learns that one out of six births is now out of wedlock. He only dimly envisions what it means in terms of human misery; yet he instinctively knows what such a mass of children deprived of any normal parental arrangement can mean to the way he himself lives and how he wants his children to live. Furthermore, as he grimly ruminates over his daughter's lot, he must ask himself *why* there are over a million unwanted pregnancies a year among early teenagers, one consequence of which is that children give birth to often retarded or physiologically damaged infants, irrevocably destroying their own lives by producing new, defective lives. And he must ask himself *why*, before sex education became mandatory in the high schools, there was seldom such misfortune, and when it did occur it was considered tragic. Today intellectual felons known as doctors and professors whom he sees on TV talk shows advocate sex education for children in spite of statistics that, with every passing year, prove that the already-catastrophic situation is getting worse. But the man's paper that brings him these figures is a liberal paper and does not give him the truth about causes, while there is a presidential candidate out there who notices the same things he has noticed, and talks about doing something about it.

The candidate calls it social issues, and unfortunately forgets about them once he is elected, after he is surrounded by so-called political sophisticates who tell him that those issues are not politically profitable. This, of course, is pure gibberish. Those issues are permanent; addressing them means recognition of reality, thus a more profound participation of politics in human lives. They fuel passions, while the functionalism of economic issues commands only a Pavlovian response. They are the same old, big questions of how to live, on which Moses, Christ, Socrates, Confucius, St. Augustine and others painfully pondered, and which made them humble and established them as mankind's great teachers.

Andrei Tarakowski, a Russian film director with dissident tendencies, once made a movie which was banned by Soviet censorship. The picture begins with a scene in which a 22-year-old man stands at the grave of his father, who had fallen in World War II. The man whispers to himself: "Father, life is so difficult. How to live?" Surrealistically, a voice comes from the grave and says something like: "How can I tell you? When I died, I was just 20..." A multitude of interpretations can derive from this allegory. We may dismiss the initial question as pompously banal, typical for nineteenth-century Russian literature. We Westerners have a tradition of inquiring of our philosophical mentors not about how to live but about who to be. During our century psychology, that allegedly hippest of all sciences, became the undisputed compendium of that knowledge, dispenser of preordained attitudes and conditioner of mass-marketed choices. Therefore, there is something naively poignant in that voice from the realm of death, which informs the questioner that one man's concept of how to live was to perish in defense of his country. Above all, there is in both the question and the figurative answer the everlasting craving for rectitude and moral order, as socially valid now as ever, even in our America of liberal nihilism and the Behavioral Left. Hitler won over the German masses by falsely presenting his philosophy as one of moral purity set against Weimar's cynical paradise in which sexual degeneracy and deviation threatened to destroy the very sense of life. We know how Nazism perverted that quest for cleansing the collective mind. We in America are heirs to a much more complex civilization whose renewal is possible not through post-Nietzschean, brutalized impulses but through the support of ancient philosophies that have never failed to nourish archhuman needs.

But we should never forget that the masses will not wait forever for the restoration of a guidance for how to live better. The masses can sense that the disintegration of a society begins with the demise of idealism and convention, with the disappearance of distinctions between what is proper and improper, becoming and unbecoming. The working-class mother knows better

than a Fifth Avenue socialite that teaching masturbation and orgasm to 12-year-old girls in order to make them "healthier and freer" is an iniquitous sham which spawns a monstrous wilderness of instincts, misdeeds, and outrage around us. That mother cannot verbalize that rearing children on moral fairy tales is better and saner than feeding them a vicious naturalism disguised as innocence: we must do it for her—we who see through the grubbiness of what the liberals and their intellectual mercenaries today call American culture.

We are able to debunk the new myths, which are infinitely more mendacious and pernicious than the old ones. There is moral and cultural sophistication in almost every antiliberal and antinihilist proposition against the fakery of freedom unmodified by any normative morality—only the news about it is suppressed, excluded from the pages of the centralized liberal media whose willful concealment of any alternative makes them mere mechanisms of disinformation. To be sure, we make mistakes which facilitate the fight against us. We have attacked the permissive sexual

ethos only in terms of its destruction of arbitrary morals, only as the dissolution of religion, family, the structures of law and order. But what about human feelings and sexual sentiments of a higher order than quantitative competition? What about existential traps and malaises of license?

Patriotism, church, and the threat of socialism are not the only arguments against promiscuity, and they may even be the weakest ones. "Do it" or "don't" is an abstract commandment that won't work; as a matter of fact, it has never worked. Only when it is linked to an individual sense of a rewarding life does it make sense, and in this light monogamy can be debated not only as ideal but also as spiritual transaction, a psychomoral comfort: one must perceive a recompense in it to follow it. It is within the territory of refined emotions where the final battle of a regenerated, healthy, and moral society will take place. *And that is* where we have the best chance to win it. Can we still win it? As my most trusted American philosopher, Fats Waller, used to say, "One never knows, do one?"

July Seminar to Consider "The Christian in Business"

The Christian Studies Institute of Hillsdale College will host a special summer seminar entitled **The Christian in Business**, July 11-16, 1982, on the Hillsdale Campus.

Institute Faculty are:

Rev. Sheldon Smith, *Rector, Washington Memorial Chapel, Valley Forge, Pennsylvania*

Dr. Timothy Lull, *Professor of Theology at Lutheran Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*

Richard Bishirjian, *Assistant to U.S. Senator Alfonse D'Amato of New York*

Dr. Charles D. Van Eaton, *Professor of Economics, Hillsdale College*

Other special guest lecturers for the seminar will also be included.

Any persons genuinely interested in increasing their understanding of the current and long-standing issues addressed in this seminar are urged to apply.

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